



Committee on Student Fees and Budget Review

UNIT REPORT: EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

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Introduction to the Unit

For over 40 years, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) has provided first generation and low-income college students with the guidance and resources necessary to succeed at the best public university in the world.

EOP academic counselors and student staff work alongside students who, despite their unique responsibilities and challenges, transform their lives through academic achievement and personal growth. EOP's individualized academic counseling, support services, and extensive campus referral network help students develop the unique gifts and talents they each bring to the university while empowering them to achieve.

Some current programs utilized by students are the academic counseling provided by EOP, the reductions in cost of graduate school testing, the summer bridge program, and their social media channels.

The unit is funded primarily by the Student Services Fee, which generally makes up 97% of their total budget. 98% of the SSF is used to fund full time employees, and they are currently employing five full time counselors. This year, the unit received \$643,000 in funds through SSF.

Unit Director Meeting Findings

Though the unit has been showing healthy growth, EOP still finds that more funding may be needed to make up for their current lack of resources, especially in terms of academic counselors and space. Every year, an increasing number of students make use of the program, many making multiple contacts throughout the year.

Ideally, EOP would want to double their staff, increasing the number of full time counselors from five to ten, as well as to increase the amount of space the unit controls. This would enable the unit to more efficiently serve a much larger number of students and provide more services to help them during their time at Cal.

Considering how 98% of the unit's budget is spent on full-time employees and how the SSF accounts for a large majority of its total budget, the SSF would essentially need to be doubled to over \$1.4 million in order to achieve this goal. This unit has received CACSSF funding to fund graduate school preparation materials for low-income students. Additionally, funding was also granted to create an EOP website with social media content and to fund a student employee for two years.

This funding has been very helpful for the EOP program and will be in use for one more year. The unit would not be able to use CACSSF funding to hire new employees because they could not risk the grant being discontinued in the future.

An important portion of the EOP Unit's funding consists of private support from annual grants and donations. Unfortunately, the unit cannot rely on temporary funding to achieve their goal of hiring and maintaining new employees since it is so unreliable. This funding could, however, be used to fund projects within the EOP program, such as an iPad project, which would give EOP students access to iPads since less than 20% of their families, let alone individual students, have access to computers at home.

This past year, 3642 unique students were served with a total of 18728 annual contacts. The current usage rate for EOP eligible students is 32%. The unit would like to increase this number to 50% within the next five years and ultimately to 100% by taking steps to reach out to the remaining eligible students and encouraging them to take advantage of the unit's services. The EOP's funding has increased every year since 2009, rising from \$354,793 to approximately \$643,000. With that increase in funding, the EOP has added two counselors, and subtracted one administrator from their team.

Interim Director Julian Ledesma also emphasized the program's dedication to searching for innovative new ways to run the unit that will help to reduce costs and maximize the benefits to EOP eligible students.

Compliance with Guidelines

The SSF guidelines indicate that the student services fee is intended for use for, but not limited to: services related to psychological health and well-being of students, social and recreational programs, services related to campus life and community, and career support.

The EOP unit is in compliance with all SSF guidelines. It uses SSF funding primarily for maintaining full-time employees and is not a unit that is typically funded by the University or by the government.

Preliminary Recommendations

The EOP unit is an essential part of the transition of first-generation and low-income students into the college environment. If possible, we would like to recommend a \$100,000 increase to the EOP unit's SSF funding in order for the unit to be able to hire one additional employee to deal with increasing student demand for their services.

We believe that this increase in funding would be merited due to the heavy student use of this program and the current understaffing. However, because the EOP unit is not currently running and does not typically run a budget deficit, we recommend that the unit's funding be maintained at its current level if a \$100,000 increase cannot be provided, since any amount less than \$100,000 would not be sufficient funding to hire a new employee.

The unit received \$15,000 in donations this year, which is twice the amount they typically receive. We hope that the strategies that the unit is implementing to draw in more donations are effective in increasing the amount of donations over the coming years. This would be very beneficial to helping the unit to expand and provide more services to students.